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A CIVIC "TRIUMPH" CIRCA 1700

After reading the fulsome compliments with which the descriptive pamphlets of the xvii century Lord Mayors' Shows are filled, one finds a certain relief in turning to the reverse side of the medal; and if the glories of the civic "triumphs" are exaggerated by their authors, the other extreme is reached in two volumes, the rarity of which is sufficient excuse for reprinting passages dealing with the Lord Mayor's installation and the ceremonies which attended this annual event at the end of the xvii century.

First, however, let us stop a moment over references to the "triumphs" of the reign of Charles II, which are uncolored by the prejudice of fond authors. Both Pepys and Evelyn saw the 1660 show; the attitude of the former is reflected by Ward and Henley half a century later. Under date of 29 October 1660, Evelyn notes:¹ "Going to London, my Lord Maior's shew stopped me in Cheapside; one of ye pageants represented a greate wood, with ye royal oake and historie of his Majesty's miraculous escape at Boscobel." Pepys writes: ". . . had a very good place to see the pageants which were many, and I believe good, for such kind of things, but in themselves but poor and absurd."² The next year, on 29 October, the mayor returned to the old custom of going to Westminster by river, and Evelyn witnessed the progress; "I saw," he writes,³ "the Lord Maior passe in his water triumph to Westminster, being the first solemnity of the nature after 20 yeares." He mentions the show for 1662:⁴ under 29 October

¹ *Diary*, edited by William Bray (London, 1879) ii, p. 118. For further descriptions of this show, see Fairhold, *Lord Mayor's Pageants* (London, 1843) pt. i, p. 68; pt. ii, p. 87; J. G. Nichols, *London Pageants* (London, 1831) p. 108. The show—written by John Tatham—is described in two different contemporary pamphlets: copies of one may be found in the Guildhall and Cambridge University Libraries; copies of the other are in the British Museum (113. l. 13) and the Bodleian (Gough Lond. 122.12).

² *Diary*, edited by H. B. Wheatley (London, 1893-99) i, p. 270.

³ *Diary*, ii, p. 137. Cf. Fairholt, p. 68; J. G. Nichols, p. 108; *Gentleman's Magazine*, XCIV, ii, p. 516. The descriptive pamphlet, entitled *London's Tryumphs*, by Tatham, is in both the Guildhall and British Museum Libraries; it has been reprinted in Heath, *Some Account of the Worshipful Company of Grocers* (3rd ed., London, 1869) appendix, p. 475 f.

⁴ *Diary*, ii, p. 153. For further information concerning this show—also by Tatham—see Nichols, p. 109; Fairholt, p. 71. The descriptive pamphlet

"was my Lo. Maior's show," he writes, "with a number of sumptuous pageants, speeches and verses. I was standing in an house in Cheapside against the place prepar'd for their Ma^{ties}. The Prince and heire of Denmark was there but not our King." Pepys writes, under the date of 29 October 1663:⁵ "The dinner, it seems, is made by the Mayor and two Sheriffs for the time being, the Lord Mayor paying one half and they the other. And the whole, Proby says, is reckoned to come to about 7 or £800 at most . . . ⁶ I . . . took coach and through Cheapside, and there saw the pageants, which were very silly . . ." He did not see the show in 1664, but his "boy and three mayds went out." Evelyn rather enjoyed himself this year.⁷ "Oct. 29, 1664. Was ye most magnificent triumph by water and land of ye Lord Mayor. I din'd at Guild-hall at ye upper table . . . The feast was said to cost £1000. I slipt away in ye crowd, and came home late."

is in the British Museum and the Bodleian; it must not be confused with *Aqua Triumphalis*, describing a water show with pageantic features which took place on 23 August 1662, when the King and Queen visited the City. Three copies of this show—also by Tatham—are in the Bodleian; one is in the Guildhall, and one in the British Museum.

⁵ *Diary*, iii, p. 322. For further description of this year's show, see Nichols, p. 109; Fairholt, p. 71. The descriptive pamphlet by Tatham, entitled *Londinium Triumphans*, is in the Guildhall.

⁶ The pageant when Sir Christopher Draper was inaugurated in 1566, cost £18 [cf. Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum* (London, 1803-07) ii, pp. 42, 43—citing the Ironmongers' books. This, of course, does not include the dinner.] The books of the Drapers' Company show that in 1516 the sum of £13, 4 s. 7 d. was paid toward "Sir Laurens Aylmer's pageant" [Herbert, *History of the Livery Companies* (London, 1836) i, p. 457].

A rare volume in the Fairholt Collection at the Society of Antiquaries (*A Particular Account of the Solemnities used at the Coronation of his Sacred Majesty King George II (Our late most Gracious Sovereign) and of his Royal Consort Queen Carolina, On Wednesday the 11th of October, 1727. Also . . . an account of their Majesties Entertainment at Guildhall, on the Lord Mayor's Day following.* London . . . 1760) gives a full account of the reception of George II and his Queen by Sir Edward Becher, Lord Mayor-elect of London, on 30 October 1727. After the royal family had witnessed the procession from a balcony near Bow Church, they went to dine at the Guildhall; the banquet on this occasion cost £4889, 4 s. (An itemized account may be found in the volume cited above, pp. 54-56.)

⁷ *Diary*, ii, p. 172. The descriptive pamphlet for 1664 (by Tatham) is in the Guildhall, the Bodleian and the British Museum. For further reference to this "triumph," see Nichols and Fairholt, *loc. cit.*

After 1671 the London shows for ten years were written by Thomas Jordan. His enthusiasm for his productions is good to hear, and before we turn to the satirists, let us glance at his description of the London crowd as he sees it, gathered to witness the "triumph" in 1679.⁸ "His Lordship . . . proceedeth through a tumultuous Torrent of crouding People, which to describe is so numerous and various, that it would exceed the full length of a Show in the Description.

"But in brief they were shows to one another, the disorder'd People below in the street was an excellent Scene of confusion to the spectators above in the Belconies (*sic*), who like Waves of the Sea did in continual agitation roul over one another's necks like Billows in the Ocean, and the Gallantry above were as pleasurable a sight to the spectators below, where hundreds of various defensive postures were screw'd, for prevention of the fiery serpents and Crackers that instantly assaulted the Perukes of the Gallants, and the Merkins of the Madams. In that scene below, I saw a fellow carried in a throng of Squeezers, upon men's backs like a Pageant for the space of thirty yards; in all which time, being a somewhat oversensible of his Elevation, strutted, cock'd his Beaver, and rid in Triumph, 'till at last a new provocation of diversion separating the shoulders of his supporters, drop'd him in a dismal dirty kennel"⁹

The fact that Ward and Henley seem to echo each other, is probably due to the resemblance which the shows of the period bore to each other; and this resemblance may be accounted for partly by the fact that the same "properties" were paraded year after year in the annual procession. After speech died out of the "triumphs" with Elkanah Settle's show for 1702¹⁰ the civic festivals degenerated to mere processions, sometimes without any pageantic features at all; and the slight originality of the City Poet was removed from them.

⁸ Taken from *London in Luster*, Jordan's pamphlet for this year. The original may be found in the Bodleian, the British Museum, the Guildhall and the Harvard University Libraries. It is reprinted by Heath, *op. cit.*, pp. 518 f. Cf. also Fairholt, p. 90 f; J. G. Nichols, p. 112.

⁹ An account of this pageant can be found in the *Domestick Intelligence: or News both from City and Country Impartially Related*, no. 34, Fryday, October 31, 1679.

¹⁰ His show for 1708 was not produced, on account of the death of Queen Anne's husband.

The fourth edition of *The London Spy* appeared in 1709; the only copy I have seen is treasured in the library of the Guildhall at London. The volume should be reprinted; despite its satire and exaggeration—which are obvious—the book gives a vivid picture of life in London about 1700; and the fascination of Hogarth and Cruikshank is in its pages.¹¹

“ . . . When the Morning came that my *Lord-Mayor* and his Attendants were to take their Amphibious Journey to *Westminster-Hall*, where his Lordship, according to the Custom of his Ancestors, was by a Kiss of *Calves-Leather*, to make a fair Promise to Her Majesty,¹² I equip’d my Carcase in order to bear with little Damage, the Hustles and Affronts of the unmannerly Mobility . . . my Friend and I . . . ventured to move towards *Cheapside*, where I thought the Triumphs would be most Visible, and the Rabble most Rude, looking upon the Mad Frolicks and Whimsies of the Latter to be altogether as Diverting (provided a Man takes Care of the Danger) as the solemn Grandure and Gravity of the Former . . . The Balconies were hung with Old Tapstery, and *Turky-work* Table-Cloths, for the cleanly Leaning of the Ladies, with whom they were chiefly fill’d . . . the Windows of each House, from the top to the bottom, being stuff’d with Heads, Pil’d one upon another like Skulls in a *Charnel-House* . . . Whilst my Friend and I were thus staring at the Spectators much more than the Show, the Pageants were advanc’d within our view, upon which such a Tide of Mob overflow’d the Place we stood in, that the Women cry’d out for Room, the Children for Breath, and every Man, whether *Citizen* or *Foreigner*, strove very hard for his Freedom.¹³ For my own part, I thought my Intrails would have come out of my Mouth . . . I was almost squeezed as flat as a Napkin in a Press, that I heartily would have join’d with the Rabble to have cry’d *Liberty, Liberty*. In this Pageant was a Fellow Riding a Cock-Horse upon a Lion,

¹¹ I quote from Edward Ward, *The London Spy* (fourth edition, London, 1709) p. 293 f. The show which he describes is, I believe, the show for 1699.

¹² This suggests that if the Show were that of 1699—and the description resembles this more closely than any other—the account was written after Anne came to the throne.

¹³ This is interesting, as showing that a good part of the crowd followed the pageants—and, if there were speaking, could have heard more than the words spoken at one stand.

but without either Boots or Spurs At the Base of the Pedestal were seated four Figures, representing, according to my most Rational Conjecture, the four Principal Vices of the City, *viz.* Fraud, Usury, Seeming-Sanctity, and Hypocrisie: As soon as this was past, the Industrious Rabble, who hate Idleness, had procur'd a Dead Cat . . . cover'd all o'er with Dirt, Blood and Nastiness, in which pickle she was handed about by the Babes of Grace, as an Innocent Diversion; every now and then being toss'd into the Face of some Gaping Booby or other. . . . By that time this Sport had gone a little about, crying out, *No Squibs, no Squibs*, another Pageant approach'd us, wherein an Old Fellow sat in a Blue Gown, Dress'd up like a Country School-Master, only he was Arm'd with a Sythe instead of a Birch-Rod, by which I understood this Figure represented *Time*, which was design'd, as I suppose, to put the City in mind how apt they are to abuse the Old Gentlemen, and not dispose of him to such Good Uses as the Laws of God, and the Laws of Man require, but Trifle their Time away in those three Vanities which were represented by the three Figures under the Dome, *viz.* Falsehood, Pride and Incontinency, which are chiefly owing to the other four Figures, the Angels representing as I suppose, the City's Imprudence, Impatience, Intemperance, and Inhumanity. . . . A third pageant was advanc'd forward, which appear'd to the Sight much Richer than the rest: What think you, says my Friend, of these Emblems? I think, said I, the chief Figure in it represents, as I imagine, a Lady of Pleasure, being Drest in much Costlier Robes than the other Female Representatives. . . .

"In every Interval between Pageant and Pageant the Mob had still a new Project to put on Foot. By this time they had got a piece of Cloth of a Yard or more Square, this they dipt in the Kennel, till they had made it fit for their purpose, then toss'd it about, expanding it self in the Air, and falling on the Heads of two or three at once, made 'em look like so many Bearers under a Pall, every one lugging a several way to get it off his Head. . . . By that time Forty or Fifty of the heedless Spectators were made as Dirty as so many Scavengers, the fourth Pageant was come up, which was a most Stately, Rich and Noble Chariot, made of Slit-Deal and Paste-Board, and in it sitting a Woman representing (as I fancy) the Whore of *Babylon*, drawn by two Goats . . .

and upon the backs of them two Figures representing Jealousie and Revenge; her Attendance (*sic*) importing the Miseries that follow her; and the Kettle-Drums and Trumpets serve to show that wheresoe'er she comes 'tis with Terror and Amazement.

" . . . The fifth Pageant mov'd forward, wherin all sorts of Trades were represented; a Man Working at a Tobacco Engine, as if he was Cutting of Tobacco, but often did not; a Woman Turning of a Wheel, as if she Spun, but did not; a Boy as if he was a Dressing of an Old Woman's Hat, but was not; which was design'd, as I suppose, to Reflect upon the Frauds and Failings of the City Traders, and show that they often pretend to Do what they Do not, and to Be what they are not, and will Say what they Think not, and will Think what they Say not, and that the World might see there are Cheats in all Trades.

"The Bully Cits March'd after in a Throng,
Huzza'd by th' Mob, as Drum'd and Pip'd along;
Whilst Wise Spectators did their Pomp disdain
And with Contempt behold the Dragling Train."

This is perhaps a satirical description of the show which Settle planned for 1699¹⁴—which it strongly resembles. The first of the five pageants on this occasion was called *The Triumphs of Honour*, whence Triumph spoke; then came *The Temple of Time*, where Time was attended by Truth, Humility, Constancy, and others. His immediate attendants bore mottoes. In the third pageant, *The Palace of Pleasure*, Flora, surrounded by Ceres, Vertumna and Pomona—with Joy, Harmony, Love and Felicity in the background—awaited the mayor's approach; the fourth pageant, *The Chariot of St. Katharine*, was drawn by goats, the supporters of the Company's arms; the Saint was attended by Faith and Piety—Victory and Peace blew trumpets, and the charioteer was Conduct. The fifth pageant was called *The Factory of*

¹⁴ *The Triumphs of London*, For the Inauguration of the Right Honourable Sir Richard Levett, Kt., Lord Mayor of the City of London. Containing a Description of the *Pageants* together with the *Publick Speeches*, and the whole Solemnity of the Day. Performed on *Monday*, the 30th Day of October, Anno 1699. All set forth at the proper Cost and Charge of the Honourable Company of *Haberdashers*. London . . . MDCXCIX. (Copies of this pamphlet are in the Guildhall and British Museum.) Cf. Fairholt, p. 115; J. G. Nichols, p. 119; (the latter does not mention the author of the show); and F. C. Brown, *Elkanah Settle, his Life and Works* (Chicago, 1910). The shows by Settle are outlined in the back of this book.

Commerce; in it Commerce presided over many shops, and papers of tobacco were distributed to the people as the big platform moved along. (It may be noted that the distribution of tobacco was not a direct trade advertisement for the Haberdashers.)

If Ward had this show in mind, he seems to have written his account of it after Anne came to the throne; for the Mayor, with a "Kiss of Calves-Leather" made a "fair Promise to Her Majesty."

The Lord Mayor's Shew: or, the City in its Glory. Now first published from an Original Manuscript of the late ingenious and facetious Orator, John Henley, M. A. (London, n. d.) is the title of another rare pamphlet describing the shows of the early XVIII century Mayors.¹⁵ One or two extracts will suffice to show the spirit of the writer. "Pageants of a Man upon a Lion, without Boots or Spurs, which is a City striving to jocky a Court; one in a blue Gown with a Scythe, for Time, to shew, they only use him for *the Crop*. Two more, in the Shape of Women, and another, with three at Work to do nothing, were the emblems of *London*, with Images about them dedicated to Reformation, and the Million Canaille dragling after, like an Army of Rats bewitched, following the Pyed Piper."¹⁶ "On that Day, the two Giants have the Priviledge, if they think it proper, to walk out and keep Holiday; one on each Side of the *Great Horse* would aggrandize the Solemnity, Shew consisting often in Bulk. . . ." ¹⁷ There is no mention of the giants—which often accompanied the Lord Mayor's procession, and came to it from the earlier "Midsummer Show" and "Royal-Entry"—in Ward; and there seem to have been no giants in the 1699 show; so we may assume that Henley is giving a composite picture of this institution.¹⁸ His oration is cited by Fairholt,¹⁹ who describes it as intended to make the town merry at the expense of the citizens, and dates it 1730.

¹⁵ This is in the British Museum [605. d. 29 (7)]. The title-page contains the text: "Surely every Man walketh in a vain *Shew*." Psalm xxxix: 6. This prepares us for a treatment of the civic "triumph" not unlike Ward's.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 16. (This should be p. 17; by a printer's error, the pagination, repeating 16, begins over again at 10 and continues to 15.)

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10 (p. 18).

¹⁸ Two "large Carv'd Figures being a *Merman* and *Mermaid*, the Supporters of the Companies Arms, properly Colour'd," floated on the water in 1700, when Sir Thomas Abney of the Fishmongers Company was installed. (The descriptive pamphlet of this show is in the Guildhall; cf. Brown, Fairholt, and J. G. Nichols, for further mention of it.)

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 124 f.

One other institution of the City—the “Waits”—is drawn on an exaggerated scale by Ward. As these have accompanied the Lord Mayor from very early times, we may quote the passage:²⁰ “We heard a Noise so dreadful and surprizing, that we thought the Devil was Riding on Hunting through the City. . . . At last bolted out from the Corner of a Street, with an *Ignis Fatus* Dancing before them, a parcel of strange *Hobgoblins* cover’d with long Frise Rugs and Blankets, hoop’d round with Leather Girdles . . . and their Noddles button’d up into Caps of Martial Figure, like a *Knight-Errant* at Tilt and Turnament, with his Wooden-Head lock’d in an Iron Helmet; one Arm’d, as I thought, with a lusty Faggot-Bat, and the rest with strange Wooden Weapons in their hands in the shape of *Clyster-Pipes*, but as long, almost as *Speaking-Trumpets*. Of a sudden they clap’d them to their Mouths, and made such a frightful Yelling, that I thought the World had been Dissolving, and the Terrible Sound of the last Trumpet to be within an Inch of my Ears.

“Under these amazing apprehensions, I ask’d my Friend what was the meaning of this *Infernal outcry*? Prithee, says he, what’s the matter with thee? Thou look’st as if thou wert Gally’d; why these are the *City Waites* . . . the Topping Tooters of the Town; and have *Gowns*, *Silver-Chains* and *Sallaries*, for playing *Lilla Bolaro* to my *Lord Mayors Horse* thro’ the City.”

Aside from the interest which Henley and Ward awaken in the reader, they are important as showing how the Lord Mayor’s Show was regarded at a time when the glory of the show was departing. Elkanah Settle—the “last of the City Poets”—wrote the last “triumph” with speeches in 1702; and from then until a renewed emphasis on history and symbolism brought back to it a semblance of art in 1884, the Show sank to inartistic depths, —the current, which had been full in the days of Peele, and early in the XVII century when such poets as Dekker, Middleton, Thomas Heywood and Webster were called upon to plan these civic festivities, grew gradually thinner; for over a century it strained along, shorn and parcelled like the Oxus. And these satires mark the end of its old splendor.

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²⁰ *London Spy*, p. 35 f. Cf. the first chapter of my forthcoming *English Pageantry—an Historical Outline* for further mention of the waits and the “men in armor.”